

Final Report

1. What problem were you addressing?

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, older adults have struggled with isolation and a lack of spiritual resources. In June 2020, more than half of adults between 50 and 80 reported feeling isolated from others, compared with 27% in 2018. Public health researchers also found that the pandemic's limited social contact was associated with depression and decreased mental health. As an organization that serves 10,000 people a year—a significant proportion of whom are older adults—Pendle Hill sought to address these issues facing older adults through providing an ecosystem of online courses and workshops.

2. What change did you expect to create? How? What were the desired objectives, outcomes and outputs of the program and progress made toward each during the reporting period?

Though Pendle Hill already had some experience with designing and administering online courses, we sought to aim farther with our Friends Foundation for the Aging-supported program. We wanted to improve our practices for ensuring equity and inclusion in online/blended meetings, as well as create a community of practice (CoP) in which this knowledge is shared between organizations and Quaker meetings.

The objectives of last year's grant-supported program were the following: 1) to provide older adults with spiritual resources; 2) to discern and implement best practices for online and blended programs; and 3) to provide older adults with an inclusive community in which they can access workshops for the arts, spirituality, and social justice. Throughout the past year, Pendle Hill made significant progress toward each of the above objectives. All online programs were delivered on time, and we received positive feedback from evaluations. Many programs exceeded attendance expectations—both in total participants and number of older adults—informing us about the importance of online offerings to communities nationwide. Through discussion with Woodbrooke and other groups, we improved processes: using breakout rooms to create opportunities for deeper spiritual work, learning how to provide practical, compassionate technical support, and inviting older adults into virtual spaces that had previously been unfamiliar or uncomfortable for them.

3. How did you measure success—both quantitative and qualitative? A chart of objectives, actions, and results is helpful. Include numbers and demographics of people touched by the work.

Our grant proposal from last year stated the following quantitative metrics and target outcomes:

- Percentage of program participants who are 65 or older (target: 60%)
- Percentage of older adult program participants from outside New England and the Mid-Atlantic states (an indication of geographic diversity/accessibility; target: 25%)
- Number of participants registered for Pendle Hill's collaboration with Woodbrooke Study Centre, "Becoming Blended Worship Communities" (target: 35 or more)

Pendle Hill met each of the quantitative targets in our proposal. We served a total of 226 participants, 151 of them older adults for a percentage of 67%. Perhaps most impressive was the geographic diversity of our older adult participants, with 58% coming from outside the Mid-Atlantic or New England states. Many of these participants remarked that if not for the online format, they would not have been able to participate in Pendle Hill's experiential learning programs.

For quantitative and qualitative data, please refer to the Appendix, which includes a table of participant metrics and a selection of evaluation quotes from the online programs. We observed that participants appreciated the chance to engage in learning with a diverse range of people from around the U.S., and even the world.

3b. Explain your organization’s efforts toward diversity, equity and inclusion.

Many of Pendle Hill’s workshops and retreats aim to dismantle present-day inequities through education, advocacy, and community-based action. In 2020 and 2021, programs included: Spirits in Darkness: Black Women’s Writing Workshop; Working Toward Right Relationship with Indigenous Peoples; Aiming for Justice: Race, Reparations, and Right Paths; Reclaiming My Authentic Self: A Six-Week Soul Restoration Series for African American Women; Beyond Diversity 101; and Mindfulness and White Privilege.

In 2013, Pendle Hill formally adopted three “Queries to Advance Diversity, Justice, and Beloved Community.” These questions serve as lenses into all conversations where the Board and staff are convened. They are used widely—on name cards, agendas, and in reports—to remind all people of the collective responsibility to use them to inform decision-making at Pendle Hill. We have shared these Queries with other organizations, some of whom have borrowed from them. They are as follows:

- 1) How might this decision affect people from other cultures or those within the same culture who have different experiences, perception, belief systems, and perspectives from our own?
- 2) To what degree have privilege, class, stereotypes, assumptions, and our ability to include other perspectives affected this decision? Will this decision promote inclusiveness, allow equal access, and welcome those we perceive as different from ourselves?
- 3) How might this decision advance Pendle Hill’s goals of promoting diversity, fostering justice, and creating the Beloved Community for all people?

As of March 2022, 37% of Pendle Hill’s Board (including at-large members) and 30% of staff identified as Black, Indigenous, or People of Color. 56% of Pendle Hill staff and 68% of the Board are women.

4. Please note any collaborations that supported your work and/or ways that you leveraged resources. How did this project engage and empower staff from all levels of your organization?

Aside from Friends Foundation for the Aging, collaborations that supported us throughout this work included Woodbrooke Study Centre, Barclay Press, and the many Quaker meetings whose members attended Becoming Blended Worship Communities. In Aiming for Justice: Race, Reparations, and Right Paths, a program designed and previously facilitated by Black feminist scholar-activist K. Melchor Hall, Pendle Hill made the decision to empower four of the program’s past participants (Lotte Lieb Dula, Melanie Gifford, Dave Morris, and Linds Roberts) to facilitate all synchronous workshop sessions, which turned out to be a successful experiment. Pendle Hill’s staff were also crucial to the delivery of online programs. Aside from the Education team consisting of Frances Kreimer, Melissa Bennett, Lina Blount, and Janaki Spickard-Keeler, other staff involved in program delivery, IT support, outreach, and administration included Francisco Burgos, David Butterworth, Hannah Mayer, Kyle McIver, Edward Wang, and Glenora Wrease.

5. Please share any unanticipated outcomes or barriers encountered. Indicate any changes in the program’s goals, strategies, personnel or timelines and the reasons behind the changes.

While the program met its goals overall, one unanticipated obstacle was lowered attendance for several summer 2021 programs, likely due to Zoom fatigue and the arrival of vaccinations empowering some participants to favor in-person activities. Moreover, the arrival of the Omicron variant posed to be another challenge, forcing us to pivot several in-person programs to online on one week’s notice in December. Fortunately, the fact that we had made previous investments in online program best practices made this swift transition possible, and made these programs accessible to older adults.

6. How do you plan to share and replicate your results?

Pendle Hill has made the discussions and findings from the Woodbrooke collaboration available to a wide network of Friends meetings and organizations, allowing for replication of best practices. In addition, we are currently improving our repository of online videos and resources that draw from online programs. In the

coming year, we hope to extend and share this work through the creation of study guides that organize and provide a window into our online content.

Within the next year, Pendle Hill is already planning to discuss its online programming practices with AFSC, FGC, and FCNL, sharing how we might create a mutually beneficial ecosystem of online content. Pendle Hill also plans to contribute to the Friends Foundation for the Aging’s aging services convening in May 2022, by sharing our findings and results with members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting, Friends General Conference, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, and others.

7. Include a project financial statement (budget and actual) for the reporting period. Please explain significant variances from the original budget and reasons for the variances (with corrective measures if overages), as well as plans for future sustainability.

Pendle Hill was able to come in under budget for the program sponsored by Friends Foundation for the Aging (by only 1.6% -- the forecasted budget was fairly accurate). Due to higher attendance than projected for online programs, we were able to raise \$10,502 more than planned from registration fees. Pendle Hill made up the difference in planned grant income by subsidizing the program more than originally planned (16.8% vs. 28.0%). Plans for future sustainability include raising more funding from non-FFA foundation grants – our proposed budget for 2022 has already raised 26% of the total budget from a Shoemaker Fund grant, and seeks to raise 21% of the budget through planned requests to non-Quaker foundations.

EXPENSES	Planned	Actual
Honoraria for workshop leaders / facilitators	\$10,500	\$10,500
Scholarships and program subsidies	\$13,000	\$11,500
Outreach and advertising	\$6,400	\$5,500
Direct staff support	\$24,950	\$24,950
IT, registrar, indirect support	\$6,400	\$9,000
Two laptops and other tech equipment	\$3,000	\$2,450
<i>Administrative overhead</i>	\$12,850	\$11,980
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$77,100	\$75,880

INCOME	Planned	Actual
Registration fees	\$19,100	\$29,602
Friends Foundation for the Aging	\$40,000	\$20,000
Bible Association of Friends in America	\$5,000	\$5,000
Pendle Hill	\$13,000	\$21,278
TOTAL INCOME	\$77,100	\$75,880

8. Feedback on your interaction with FFA would be helpful. How have we helped? Made it harder? What else can we do to facilitate your work?

Our interaction with Friends Foundation for the Aging has been extremely fruitful to us. We thought the midyear check-in was a good alternative to a written report, and we have appreciated the guidance and feedback on our work from Board members and Executive Director Susan Hoskins. Even more valuable has been the effort by FFA to help facilitate collaborations between Quaker organizations—to discuss “knowledge accessibility,” intergenerational conversation, and our concern for aging Friends and seekers. We feel fortunate to have FFA as such an active collaborator on our online education programs, and are grateful for our shared commitment to providing benefit to older adults.

**Appendix: Participant Data for Friends Foundation for the Aging-sponsored programs,
April 2021-March 2022**

Program Title	Facilitator(s)	Date	Number attended	Percentage of participants over 65	Percentage from outside NE/Mid-Atl. Region
Becoming Blended Worship Communities	Simon Best and Lina Blount	June 11-13, 2021	69	63%	67% (18% from UK)
The Way of Clearness: Cultivating Clarity, Insight, and Action	Valerie Brown and John Baird	December 1-4, 2021	23	57%	87%
Café Darkness: Virtual Writing Workshop for People of Color	Joanne Daley and Danie “Ocean” Jackson	October 18-21, 2021	7	71%	43%
Aiming for Justice: Race, Reparations, and Right Paths	K. Melchor Hall (elderred)	February 1-21, 2021	16	55%	55%
<i>Illuminate</i> Summer Speaker Series	Barclay Press (16 lecturers)	June 14-August 23, 2021	47	81%	53%
Creative Prayer	Jesse White	June 1-15, 2021	20	65%	60%
Going Deeper Together	Marcelle Martin	May 21-23, 2021	16	50%	60%
Fierce Biblical Women Speak Power Today	Melissa Bennett	April 11-May 9, 2021	28	94%	21%
Totals			226	67%	58%

Participant Quotes

“I discovered during a break in which we were to walk outside how truly beautiful my block is if I walk away from the commerce on Broadway. I've made it a new practice.” -Going Deeper Together (Marcelle Martin)

“The lovely flow of activities, silence, prayer, art time – never a feeling of being rushed or stressed by too much.” - Creative Prayer (Jesse White)

“These opportunities to share across geography are valuable. Being heard and listening are important. There are experts to consult. Each meeting has particular challenges to coming together again. Foreground community, select technology to serve that need.” -Becoming Blended Worship Communities (Lina Blount and Simon Best)

“The range of folks from different parts of the world, although there were folks and parts of the world missing. The questions that were brought before us for consideration. The level of trust and safety to share our own and our meetings' experiences. The sense of genuine interest among friends.” – Becoming Blended Worship Communities

“The worship sharing, the focus question and small break out rooms. I also felt very held and supported by the tech structure (thank you, Lina!). I liked that there was a sense of gathering and knowing that we were not quite ready to start when not all had joined, and of waiting. I also liked the breaks from the entire session and the musical and clock countdown. Well thought out!” – Becoming Blended Worship Communities

“Loved the way we made room to talk back to the text. I loved the messy stories that we covered. I loved Melissa's leadership in framing our reflections and discussions.” - Fierce Biblical Women (Melissa Bennett)